

Message Text

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71

ACTION ARA-20

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USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

DRC-01 /112 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0476

INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE IMMEDIATE

CINCSO CZ

CINCLANT POLAD CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 1982

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION STILL UNDECIDED ON BOYCOTT ISSUE

REF : SD-1948

1. AFTER SEVERAL APPARENTLY FRUITLESS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD (JCE) (REFTEL), THE FOUR-PARTY SANTIAGO ACCORD ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT (MAY 13) THAT THE OPPOSITION WOULD DEFINITELY BOYCOTT THE MAY 16 ELECTIONS UNLESS THE JCE YIELDED ON THE FOLLOWING FOUR POINTS:

A) REVOCATION OF THE JCE'S MAY 10 RESOLUTIONS, INCLUDING THAT PERMITTING VOTERS TO CAST THEIR BALLOTS AT ANY POLLING BOOTH IN THE MUNICIPALITY WHERE THEY ARE REGISTERED (REFTEL),

B) IMMEDIATE CONFINEMENT TO BARRACKS OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES,

C) RELEASE OF ALL "POLITICAL" PRISONERS AS WELL AS OPPOSITION LEADERS DETAINED DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS, AND
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D) PROVISION OF OFFICIAL TRANSPORTATION TO ENABLE ACCORD REPRESENTATIVES AT ELECTORAL BOOTHS IN INTERIOR TO ACCOMPANY BALLOT BOXES TO URBAN AREAS.

2. THE OPPOSITION GAVE THE JCE UNTIL NOON TODAY (MAY 14) TO MEET THESE DEMANDS.

3. AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE ACCORD WAS PUBLICLY PRESENTING ITS FOUR DEMANDS, THE JCE, IN AN EVIDENTLY UNCOORDINATED MOVE, ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT ITS DECISION TO MODIFY ITS MAY 10 RESOLUTIONS, OBVIOUSLY IN AN ATTEMPT TO CONCILIATE THE OPPOSITION. THE JCE RESOLVED THAT ALTHOUGH VOTERS COULD STILL CAST THEIR BALLOTS ANYWHERE WITHIN THEIR MUNICIPALITY OF REGISTRATION, THESE BALLOTS WOULD NOT BE COUNTED UNTIL THE JCE HAD ASSURED ITSELF THAT SUCH VOTERS WERE IN FACT SO REGISTERED. THIS WOULD BE DONE VIA A CAREFUL NAME CHECK AGAINST THE MUNICIPAL REGISTER. THE JCE'S ANNOUNCEMENT WAS GREETED WITH WARM PRAISE IN A MAY 14 EDITORIAL BY THE INFLUENTIAL DAILY LISTIN DIARIO.

4. THE ACCORD PARTIES, APPARENTLY UNPREPARED FOR THE JCE'S NEW MOVE LAST NIGHT, BEGAN MEETING AGAIN EARLY THIS MORNING TO DECIDE WHETHER TO ACCEPT THE JCE'S COMPROMISE SOLUTION OR BOYCOTT THE ELECTION AS REPEATEDLY THREATENED. AS OF THIS WRITING THEY WERE STILL MEETING.

5. A NEW ELEMENT WHICH MAY SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE THE ACCORD'S FINAL DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS IS THE RECENT INTENSIFYING INTERVENTION OF THE ARMED FORCES ON BEHALF OF BALAGUER'S REELECTION. FOR EXAMPLE, AT THE SANTO DOMINGO REFORMIST PARTY RALLY MAY 12 AND SUBSEQUENTLY IN THE CAPITAL, CERTAIN UNITS OF THE ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN SEEN CONSPICUOUSLY SPORTING RED (REFORMIST) NECKERCHIEFS, ARMBANDS, AND/OR FLAGS, OPENLY IDENTIFYING WITH BALAGUER'S CANDIDACY DESPITE THE APRIL 30 PLEDGE BY THE ARMED FORCES NOT TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN POLITICS (SD-1814).

6. DESPITE THE FACT THAT ELECTIONS ARE ONLY A DAY AND
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A HALF AWAY, THE OPPOSITION HAS AS YET NOT DECIDED TO BOYCOTT THE ELECTIONS. WHETHER THE INCREASINGLY ACTIVE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES WILL AID THEM IN THIS DECISION REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

7. COMMENT: OF THE OPPOSITION'S FOUR DEMANDS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THREE COULD BE AT LEAST PARTIALLY SATISFIED. THE JCE'S RULING LAST NIGHT SEEMINGLY OFFERS THE

ELECTORAL SAFEGUARDS SOUGHT BY THE ACCORD. IN ADDITION, THE JCE COULD WITHOUT MUCH DIFFICULTY AGREE TO FURNISH TRANSPORTATION TO ACCORD REPRESENTATIVES TO ACCOMPANY BALLOT BOXES. FOR ITS PART, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT FIND IT PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT TO RELEASE FROM PRISON THOSE ACCORD MILITANTS RECENTLY DETAINED. AS FOR CONFINING THE ARMED FORCES TO BARRACKS, THIS DECISION HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE ACCORD'S DEMAND WAS ANNOUNCED. THE ONLY POINT WHICH THE GODR IS UNLIKELY TO YIELD ON IS THE ONE CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF SO-CALLED "POLITICAL PRISONERS", MANY OF WHOM ARE CONVICTED EXTREME LEFTIST TERRORISTS. THUS, ALTHOUGH SOME ELEMENTS WITHIN THE OPPOSITION MAY STRONGLY ADVOCATE ABSTENTION, THERE IS YET SUFFICIENT REASON TO BELIEVE THAT COOLER HEADS MAY PREVAIL AND THE OPPOSITION WILL ULTIMATELY DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE.

8. IN ANY EVENT, DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE PAST SEVENTY-TWO HOURS HAVE NOT UNEXPECTEDLY CAUSED A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN PUBLIC TENSION AND EXCITEMENT AND HAVE SEEMINGLY ENHANCED THE GOVERNMENT'S ELECTORAL PROSPECTS.
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